

CROSS RUFF FOR OVERTRICKS

You are the dealer with this hand:

S	South
♠	A72
♥	J10865
♦	J1054
♣	K

After two passes, partner opens 1♣. You respond 1♥ and he rebids 1NT. If you had a couple of more points, you could make the conventional bid of 2♦. This convention is called New Minor Forcing (NMF). It is forcing for one round and asks partner to describe his hand further. His hand is limited to 12-14 balanced points. If he had more, he would have opened 1NT. But his shape is unknown. He might have 4 spades or 3 hearts. Your bidding the unbid minor suit (here, 2♦) asks him to bid either a 4-card major or hearts depending on which suit he can describe. If he has the maximum for his bid, he jumps; otherwise he bids at the 2-level. If he has neither, he bids something else.

Since you don't have an invitational strength hand, you can't bid 2♦. You must make the only bid available – 2♥. This normally promises 6 hearts, but you have no choice but to cheat with this particular hand. Partner passes and 2♥ becomes the final contract.

West leads the ♦K, and this is the full deal:

7	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ 985 ♥ KQ7 ♦ A6 ♣ A10543		P	1♣	P
W West			P	1NT	P
♠ 10643 ♥ 32 ♦ KQ83 ♣ 876			P	P	P
	E East				
	♠ KQJ ♥ A94 ♦ 972 ♣ QJ92				
	S South				
	♠ A72 ♥ J10865 ♦ J1054 ♣ K				
					NS EW

You can count an easy 8 tricks: 1 spade, 4 hearts, 1 diamond and 2 clubs. But you want to make as many overtricks as possible. The secret of this hand will be to cross ruff the losing diamonds and clubs using the small trump; saving the trump honors to drive out the opponents trump.

Before you set up the cross ruff, however, you must unblock and ♣K and discard one of the losing spades on the ♣A. Then after ruffing a club, lose a the second diamond and you will be all set to take 10 tricks! This was done on a combined 22 HCP.

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/h2lzqmy> or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the “Next” button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on “Play” you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own